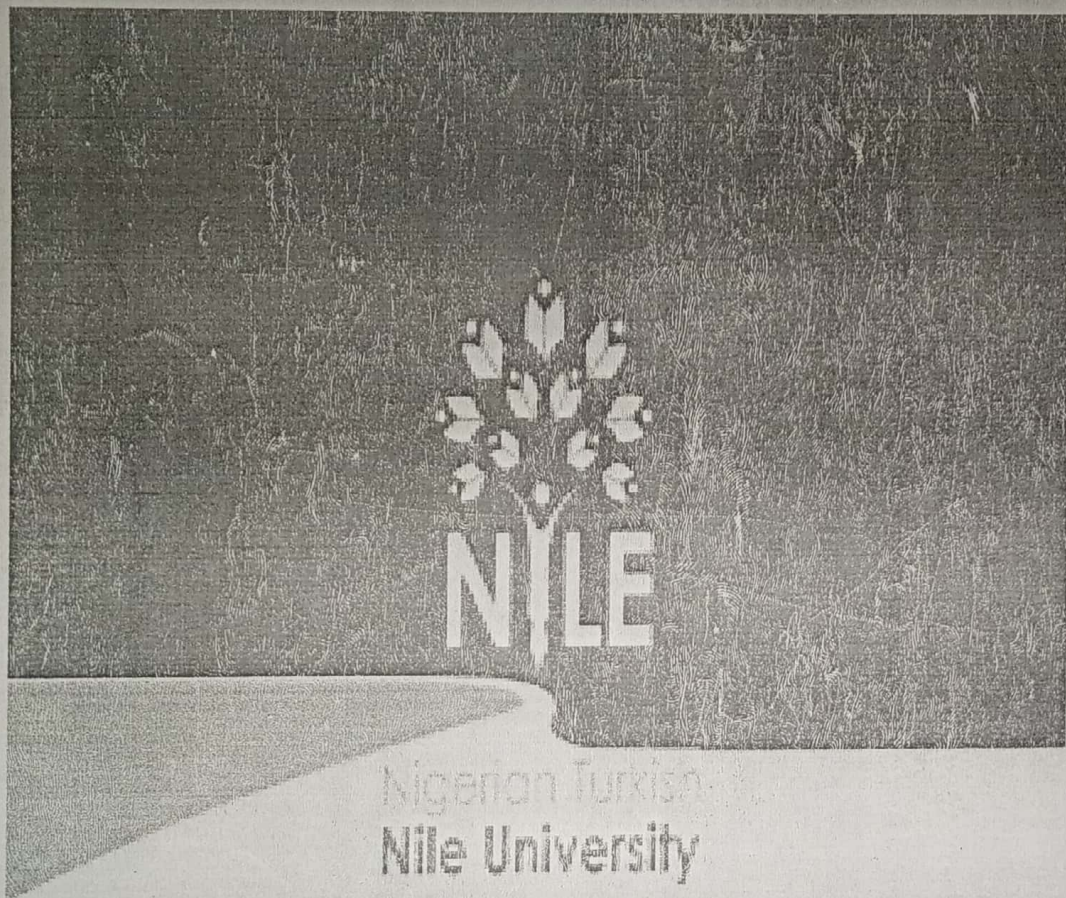


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Language Studies in Global Initiatives for Integrated National Transformation

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The thrust of this study was to make Linguistics and English language study as tools in global initiatives for integrated development. The existence of a close relationship between English language and global initiatives for integrated development was considered very important because language is viewed as a base-order system feeding higher-order systems of integration and development. The coming together of people of diverse and with divergent opinions globally is possible only by using language (English) as its social engineering or social factor. Since developments such as economic, human, sustainability, poverty reduction, good health care delivery system, gender equality, disaster preparedness, human rights, education, among others, are global desire, therefore, the presence of English language, the world language, and the medium of instruction cannot be over emphasized. As such, the dimensional rubrics of Linguistics and English language studies such as pedagogical, organizational, linguistic, technological, psychological and sociological dimensions are pointers to the efficacies of global initiatives for integrated development. Based on these therefore, it was concluded that for an individual or a nation to enjoy economic fairness and a fulfilled life, there must be a study of science, technology and information system which must embrace Linguistics and English language as their lubricants.

Key words: Linguistics, language studies, global initiative, integrated development, oracy and literacy.

INTRODUCTION

Literacy, the skill of reading, writing and computing which are embedded in linguistics and language studies must be important and significant for it to have called or engaged the attention of the whole world since the invention of the art of reading and writing about five thousand years ago. Oracy (oral culture) and literacy (print culture) have existed side by side

since then with literacy gaining while oracy loses. As long as people lived in small groups, villages and communities with little or no noticeable linkages, oracy persisted, and was adequate since members understood the monolingual culture of such small groups as existed. The cultures were then handed down orally through generations (8). But in the contemporary universe, communities have assumed larger dimensions and have mingled for commerce and industry; wars have taken place, which have resulted in the conquest

and absorption or colonization of weaker communities. Such communities consequently became bilingual or multilingual, thus making communication to become difficult. By this, the art of oracy become grossly inadequate and insufficient. Oracy became inadequate because of the multiplicity of cultures that emerged and inefficient because the facts required in handing over culture, norms, history, political and even economic practices from one generation to another could not be retained in the human memory without written records. It is therefore clear that oracy is now less used because technology has universal stage on literacy. This implies that to meaningfully function as a global citizen, participate in politics, religious affairs, education, administration, commerce, health, business among others require the art of literacy.

Obi-okoye (9) submitted that language enables humankind to look back literally to the account or record of events, or to make projections and look forward into the future or to leap into space and from there communicate to the world. Language appears to be the single most important endowment of human kind as a means of understanding one another and our society and for resolving some of the problems and tensions that arise from human interaction. Obi-okoye went further that through language, issues of human respect and tolerance are raised and resolved. Many problems developed as a result of poor conceptualization of language, yet, solutions to world problems, no matter how trifle, serious and intractable depends on language, an indication that languages perform such functions as communication, emotional expression, social interaction, entertainment, national, logical, propositional thinking and learning. Importantly, the progressive extension works of Johann Herder (1744-1803), William Von Humboldt (1772 – 1835), Edward Sapir (1884-1939) and Benjamin Wharf (1897-1914) in (9) on the relationship between language and thought

are pointers to “linguistic determinism” and “linguistic relatively” which give invaluable insight into the nature of, and the relationship between language and thought and consequently integrated development

Background Information on Global Initiatives for Integrated Development

Established in 2005 (incorporated under Global Strategic Events Pte Ltd. 2007), Global Initiatives promotes partnership solutions to global challenges through film, international events and media projects. By sharing knowledge and best practices, and calling on all stakeholders to take action to address some of the greatest challenges facing the world.

Global Initiatives is a wide concept that concerns all levels of developments on an international scale. It is the basis for international classifications such as developed countries, developing countries and least developed countries. In pursuance of this objective, however, many schools of thought and conventions regarding the exact features constituting development of a country emerged. Historically, Global Initiative (G.I.) has been synonymous with economic development. Recently, it is also used in holistic and multi-disciplinary context of human development, as well as other concepts like sustainable development, competitiveness, equality of life, etc. and having language /linguistics as its tools. In the context of human development, it usually encompasses foreign aid, governance, healthcare, poverty reduction, gender equality, disaster preparedness, infrastructure, economics, human rights, environment and most importantly education which have English studies as its fulcrum or power house. It is made clear that international development is different from single development because it is specifically composed of institutions and politics that arose after the Second World War. These institutions focus on alleviating

poverty and improving living conditions (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, Talk: International development).

In another instance, the model for self-financing, ecological, sustainable, local integrated development projects provide single down to earth practical solutions to poverty and development related problems, setting out step by step how the solutions are put into effect. Considering the impoverished state of our nation, (3) asserted that poverty used to be a consequence of lack of education, but now lack of education has become a consequence of poverty. And it is in light of this that the Save the Children Fund, Westport (CT) Press release 01 March, 2011 asserted that "if rich countries were to transfer just six days" worth of military spending on development assistance for basic education, we could close the US\$16 billion external financing gap for global education and achieve Education For All (EFA) goals putting all children into school by 2015.

Language study is a linguistic and largely a multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary activity which all over the world is accepted as bedrock of socio-economic and socio-political developments of any nation. Its dimensions include:

1. Pedagogical Dimension: Pedagogical dimension is the base of the overall organization and co-ordination of language teaching activities, such as selecting, grading, analyzing, presenting, testing and evaluating items, among others. It is the basis for effectively using English as second language methods, skillfully adapted to challenge every learner or group of learners to make them global citizens. Embedded in this dimension is the question of the vision of the society: What kind of society do we want for ourselves, our children and the generations yet unborn? In the light of this, it is very important we allow ourselves to be advised by the experiences of other countries that

have used education (English studies by implication) to climb out of the dark pit of hopelessness which is purely a consequence of functional education, deliberate investment and careful planning so that the world language, English is taught and learned to solve problems of English as second language. ESL teachers should not only acquire modern insights of linguistics and linguistics theories of second language learning such as mother tongue or language 1 and language 2 learning theories, error analysis, contrastive analysis, among other theories but should apply these copiously in their ESL classrooms in order to promote communicative competence for global utilization. The linguistic insights mean linguistics notions that increase the ESL teachers' understanding of the native language and of language of teaching and learning (4) and (7). In corroborating the above assertions, (9) submitted that a linguistics theory is a language plan or scheme existing in the mind only which is a speculative or conjectural view of languages. It is seen as the ground rule of an integrated group of the fundamental principle underlying the science of language and its applications such as imitation, language acquisition device (LAD), cognition, input hypotheses, etc. as examples of language acquisition theories (7).

2. Organizational Dimension: This spells out the physical and administrative facilities for the pedagogical process such as the status of the language involved, educational and linguistics policy of the government, the class-size, national facilities for research development and teacher education and motivation, coordination of, and available information about language teaching. In line with the above, an adviser to the former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, also lays emphasis that the British government has changed pretty much every aspect of education policy in England and Wales, often more than once "the funding of

schools, the governance of the schools, the curriculum standards, assessment and testing, the role of local government, the role and nature of national agencies, school administration, teachers' motivation, etc., but that the only thing that has not been changed is the outcome; the National Foundation for Educational Research was said to have and, until recently, "no noticeable improvement on the standards of literacy and numeracy in schools for five years despite the tripling of education spending per student for England and Wales since 1970. He went further that the solution does not seem to be more money because Australia and the United States of America who have doubled education spending since 1980 confirmed it, and if it were the issue of teachers' motivation and salaries, countries like Germany, Spain and Switzerland that have the highest teacher salaries should be in the top league, but they are not. Based on this he suggested coming together of the world in the field of education for universal initiative for integrated development. While lending credence to the above, (3) posited that recent studies have, in fact shown that the best performing countries in education do so much better than the worst and the same countries continue to lead again and again. Canada, Finland, Japan, Singapore and South Korea have consistently been in the top five, despite the fact that they (top five countries) spend less on education than the biggest spenders. The issue is not even more studying time but for concerted initiative for integrated developments.

3. Linguistic Dimension: This is primarily concerned with the scientific description of the language to be taught, and the contrastive analysis of the pattern of languages in contact i.e. L1 and L2, and error analysis to establish and deal with inter and intra-language errors, developmental errors and their implications for L2 learning which is seen as an integrative instrument for global development.

This linguistic dimension aims to assist ESL teachers not only to apply necessary linguistics insights in their pedagogical exercise but also to develop necessary activities that will help learners to acquire the best language skills for sustainable development. In another development, (10) opines that the development of any nation is firmly rooted in applied linguistics research. He goes further to state that capacity building or integrated development entails the enhancement of the capacity of applied linguistics departments to achieve to objectives of applied language development with minimal difficulty. It, (applied linguistics) is based on the available human, material and contextual resources as a yardstick for theoretical framework for interpreting the quality and quantity of improvement perceptible in applied linguistics teaching-learning and research (1), (11) and (2). Furthermore, the integrative span of applied linguistics includes sociolinguistics (which focuses on societies and their languages), psycholinguistics (mental alertness or capability and languages), contrastive linguistics (finding areas of diverse and convergence in language), inter/intra language studies (studying different languages within and outside certain language(s)) then discourse and pragmatic analysis. To drive home this point, Faculty of Education Ibadan: (1988) argued that even the pedagogics who do approach language teaching from purely methodological tricks have come to realize that little or nothing can be achieved in the classroom for L2 development without input from applied linguistics studies.

4. Technological Dimension: This dimension is concerned with necessary aids or facilities for teaching and learning the language which include mass media, such as radio, language laboratories, tape recorder, audio-visual, video, internet, power-point, etc. These among other facilities help teachers to deliver their

instructions and at the same time help learners to learn with ease.

Although knowing the most advanced technology in the world does not lead to change or improvement, it is its application that produces the desired benefit. There are stockpiles of information that require dissemination and applications in order to solve scientific and technical problems. It is for this reason that the centre for industrial research and development (CIRD) of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife was established in 1968, which up to date serves as an arm of the continuing education of that institution (6).

Using these facilities effectively will make literacy more effective, productive and result-oriented. They provide a vast resource through which people can learn. Apart from the above listed usages, they can also serve as problem-solving and preventing-problems devices

As a problem-solving device: (6) was of the opinion that a potential beneficiary of the activities of technology enables the learners to vividly see the things they are being taught, which would probably allow them to ask questions upon which the instructor would search, analyse, explain and evaluate the very question(s) asked by the learners to solve their problems.

As a problem-preventing device, the awareness brought about the questions asked by the students, and the search analysis, explanation and evaluation by the instructor would help prevent problems where applicable, because technology has made the whole world a "smaller village" where many problems even international ones are solved within seconds in a "so far so near" manner. By so doing, education will be a change-agent for achieving economic and political prosperity. However, it is noticed that the potential of education as an instrument of positive change and sustainable development has not been exploited enough in Nigeria

because the economic and political systems and importantly the educational system are all afflicted with acute import dependency syndrome (AIDS), which is the economic brand of HIV/AIDS that is ravaging the social fabric of most Third-World countries (8).

5. Psychological Demission: This dimension has to do with motivation, positive attitude, high aptitude, language behaviour, problems of L1 interference, interest between motivation and language learning, in-built language learning mechanism i.e. LAD, some pathological problems such as aphasia (inability to express thoughts in words or inability to understand thoughts as expressed in spoken or written words, caused by brain disease or damage), other problems may include repetitions, omission, insertion or even regression, among other factors. As such, language teachers would need psycholinguistic insights and theories in order to improve upon his pedagogical duties (8). Lawal further submitted that preparing learners for success in occupational (learning) roles is a complete and difficult process. Functional competence must be developed in critical areas ranging from effective characteristics, manual art, and technical knowledge to mathematics, written language and oral language all as a result of psychological stability. The ability to competently read therefore requires related materials which are otherwise known as computational literacy

6. Sociological Dimension: This is about the use of language in a variety of ways as determined by social, situation and belief. It is generally believed that language must be used contextually for effective communication. However, the increasing access to education in our society through the Universal Basic Education as the key objective of the EFA in the context of repositioning education is a critical entry point strategy to poverty eradication, we would therefore require a more

sophisticated definition of the concept of "access to education", to exceed the concern over quantity and to focus on quality. We must unpack "access" to go beyond mere access to school to place importance on access to education. This way, we cannot claim that a child has access to education by the mere fact of attending school, unless such a child,

through the totality of the resources provided by the society, requires the skills and abilities expected of children of his or her age and schooling, they major concern therefore should be quality education for all which in increasingly becoming a mirage owing largely to educational and social stratifications of two types of education in our society i.e. education for the poor and education for the rich (3).

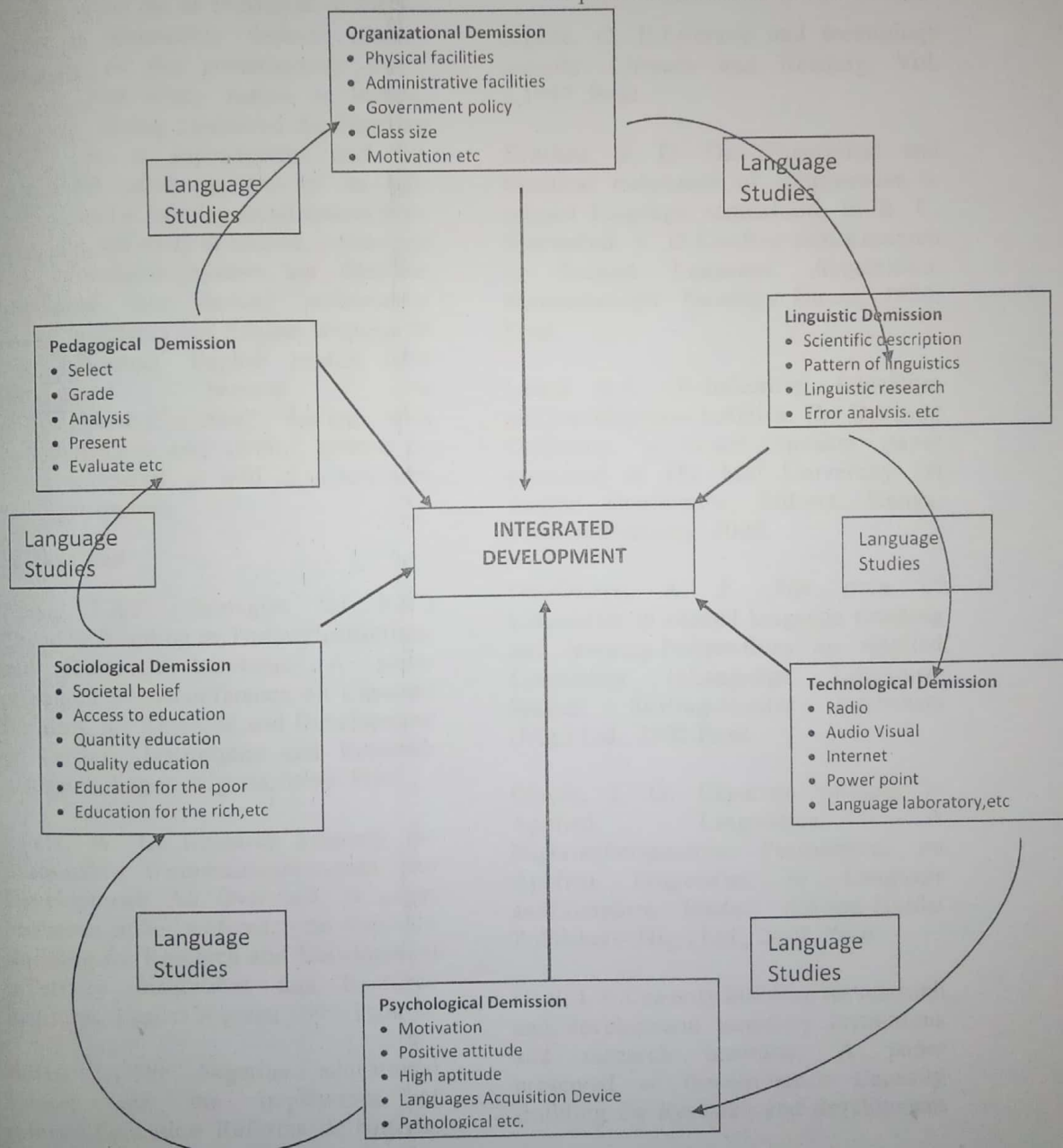


Figure 1: Cyclical Model of Language Studies for Integrated Development

CONCLUSION

To survive is to live quality life, to meaningfully participate in politics, to enjoy economic fairness, to be socially acceptable and to have personal satisfaction and fulfillment. This is true for individuals and the nation as a whole. Survival either for an individual or for the nation is impossible without literacy especially as the contemporary world assumes that every nation is literate. However, having conceived the Nigerian society as a supra-system and the educational sector as one of its sub-systems, and a complex social system in its own right, the study of science, technology and information system are therefore transferred into desired performance having linguistics and English language as their lubricants. English studies have therefore become an interdisciplinary "science" dealing with communication and control systems in living organisms, as well as in machines and organizations.

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